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The Devil in Confederate New Orleans:
Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein's Second Novel¹
with a Translation of
Wie der Teufel in New Orleans ist (1861)

Steven Rowan

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Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein, a renegade member of an ancient baronial house in Bavarian Franconia, came to America in 1848 not as a refugee of revolution but as a remittance man. His father regarded Ludwig to be unstable to such a degree that he asked King Ludwig I to help send him far away from Bavaria. Although his father contemplated for his son a subaltern's command over Sepoy troops in India, young Reizenstein ended up in New Orleans. After a brief interim period traveling across America to get his bearings and learn a trade, Ludwig von Reizenstein established himself in New Orleans as a surveyor while pursuing his other avocations as a humorous writer and an amateur naturalist. He published his first full length novel, *Die Geheimnisse von New Orleans*, serially during 1854 and 1855 in the *Louisiana Staats-Zeitung*, although the later book edition was withdrawn from publication. It deserves its reputation as a scandalous book, describing the coming birth of a black messiah whose destiny was to punish whites for the crime of slavery. Reizenstein would also publish a full length

novel in the *Deutsche Zeitung* of New Orleans in 1865, at the very end of the Civil War. *Bonseigneur in New Orleans* picked up Reizenstein's earlier theme of the crime of the Creoles in introducing slavery to the Caribbean and the American South, but it seems on first reading to be restrained, even self-censored in comparison with the high-spirited irresponsibility of the *Mysteries*, which was a full-scale adaptation of E. T. A. Hoffmann's gothic style of horror. After that time Reizenstein's appearance in print was entirely as a naturalist, describing as his own the flora and insectia of southern Louisiana. He would be posthumously immortalized by George Washington Cable in a novella, "The Entomologist."²

It appears, however, that Reizenstein also made another effort to describe New Orleans and its denizens in a novel, one that described New Orleans as a Confederate city at the start of the Civil War. Although only a fraction of it was published, what we can recover at this late date is fascinating.

The first episode of *Wie der Teufel in New Orleans ist und wie er die Dächer von den Häusern abdeckt* [How the Devil is in New Orleans and How He Lifts the Roofs of Houses] was published in the *Deutsche Zeitung* of New Orleans on 29 September 1861. Seven additional Sunday installments followed through 1 December, when the serial unceremoniously ceased, without explanation, never to be revived. Despite its short life, enough episodes appeared to reveal that Reizenstein had composed a full-length gothic novel set in Confederate New Orleans that addressed the bizarre situation of the city and its German

population during that strange space of a year-and-a-fortnight between 15 April 1861 and capture by federal forces on 1 May, 1862.

The first episode³ begins in front of a shop window on Canal Street in New Orleans, where “trophies” of the recent Confederate victory at Manassas (Bull Run -- 21 July 1861) are being displayed. There is a bloodstained fez from the New York Fire Zouaves along with other souvenirs of the Yankee rout, including weapons, a surgical kit and the like. Among these items is a peculiar cloak beset with strange silver buttons and bangles. Among the crowd inspecting these treasures is a tall man dressed as a colonel of zouaves, who soon draws the attention of the narrator. He seems a stranger to the other officers and men on the street, and they begin to wonder quietly whether he is “one of theirs.” He soon indicates that the strange cloak was his own, lost on the battlefield some weeks before, and that he intended to recover it. Further conversation leads to the stranger lifting a pantleg to show a horse’s hoof instead of a foot. “Greetings, *Signor Diavolo*,” the narrator declares, not entirely surprised by this apparition.

Satan in person, in the uniform of a colonel of the New York Fire Zouaves, enters the shop and buys the cloak back for two hundred dollars in gold coin. This time it is not magic but money that works its spell.

In the second episode,⁴ Signor Diavolo makes use of his won cloak to make himself invisible to others, a tactic that proves useful once he is recognized as wearing the uniform of a federal regiment. Soon he is also sporting the

unmistakeable "Imperial" beard and mustache of the late Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, the Union's first war hero (died 24 May 1861). Ellsworth gave his life while taking down an offending Confederate flag in Virginia visible from Washington. He would lie in state in the White House, be buried as a martyr of the United States, and even used as a substitute for the executed John Brown in sheet-music versions of "Glory, Glory, Halleluia!" In choosing to "become" Ellsworth, the Devil was absolutely determined to provoke trouble at a time of high Southern patriotism.

On the street near Union and Carondelet, the Devil and the narrator encounter a German preacher bearing a collection box and crucifix, seeking to gather money among Germans of the South to make amends to Southerners for the sins of their fellow Germans to the North. The precarious position of Germans in the South is underlined here, since Forty-Eighter propaganda had convinced everyone that all Germans in America were abolitionists and Unionists. This put every German in the South on probation if not in peril. The Devil terrifies the preacher, sending him fleeing with the message that the Germans needed not preachers but self-reliance, as they had shown when they bled and died in the revolutions of 1848. Following this scene, the Devil and his companion resort to a bar to drink waves of German beer. Then Signor Diavolo makes his mission clear: he is in New Orleans to lift the roofs from houses to reveal the scandals within.⁵

At this point, before the true business of the novel has begun: Satan himself addresses a letter to “the author or authors of ‘the art of deroofing,’” beginning, “Dear Mystery of the Crescent City.” He starts by declaring that he was often in New Orleans on business anyway, since it played a major part in his plans.

It is not by accident, for accident plays no role with me, but it is rather the destiny of the New World that a masterpiece of governance founded by me has been overcome by time and goes to its ruin even before I had completed my game, by my reckoning. I won, as usual, but in a shorter time than I had dared hope.⁶

The Devil goes on to describe his chance encounter with Reizenstein’s writings about himself. His only cavil is that the Devil has better things to do than lift roofs, “especially since he is playing a major role in the world-historical events that are now shaking America’s continent.”

This excursus in the narrative completed, Signor Diavolo and his companion ride the fire-telegraph lines through the French Quarter from Rampart Street to Canal Street well after midnight to reach the home of the beautiful Creole Cornelia de ***y, wife of a leading Confederate officer now serving far away.⁷ It turns out that she is no Penelope to her Odysseus. The

observers happen on the scene of the fair Cornelia paying \$550 to two Italian oystermen to carry letters to the captain of the federal blockade ship "Niagra." At least one of these letters appears to be a love letter to someone other than her husband.

This treasonous deed by "one of the most prominent families of the city" shows that Reizenstein had not lost his power to shock.

I considered what degree of self-confidence and heroism was required for this woman, the wife of a man who held such a high position and had only recently been entrusted by the leaders of our young republic with an influential military post, to decide to prostitute her most inner secrets to two such disreputable subjects. This is to say nothing of the treasonous message entrusted to them, whose result must subject her own husband to the revenge of his political enemies.⁸

But the Devil does play gallant favorites, and he betrays the fishermen while preserving Cornelia's reputation, confirming that Goethe's characterization of the Devil still holds true:

I am a part of that force

That always wills the bad and does only good.

The second roof to be lifted is at the other end of the Quarter, on Esplanade, but on the way there the Devil gives his own accounting of current events, which parallel the process of heaven. There had long been rebellions in heaven, but there was now an opposition even in hell:

Yes, I assure you, my friend, I myself shudder to think of this epoch-making age when everything, earth, heaven and hell, are in wild ferment, whose end result — who knows? — will perhaps only be that all the physical conquests made by you humans will collapse with a mighty bang, so that millenia later you will need a Copernicus to show you not to fall on your heads — and then?

The dance will probably start over from the beginning.

The second house, on Esplanade, is more modest than the first, a cottage surrounded by a thick patch of trees and planted garden. Children snored away in a bedroom while the lady of the house, in “deep negligée,” kissed a daguerreotype of her husband. There follows a scene of hocus-pocus in which a man reputed a suicide actually dies far away in Cuba, and his spirit manifests

itself in the cottage.⁹ The Devil pockets a strange crystalline light, and the lady faints when a picture of her husband smashes. It is all too weird for our narrator, who flees the Devil's company and avoids him for weeks.

In the last printed episode, the narrator encounters the Devil once more, this time at a German-language theater.¹⁰ His Excellency is dressed in the garb of a dandy, with a sulfur-colored vest. The stage is clearly being set for new adventures.

It is at this point that the tale is at an end. Why? There is no indication why, but in an era of political crisis, the fey playfulness and irresponsibility of Reizenstein probably hit too close to home to be tolerable. He would not return to fiction until the very end of the War, in April, 1865, when he would publish *Bonseigneur in New Orleans*, which would also be the object of protest and rewriting. After this, Reizenstein concentrated on writing about natural subjects. He continued to make a living as a surveyor and placard-painter of property for sale.

The novel was clearly conceived on a large scale, running at the same time as a novel by Theodor Mügge (*Verloren und Gefunden*) and two novels by the historical novelist Luise Mühlbach (*Johann Golzthowsky* and *Die Tochter eines Kaisers*). The use of foreshadowing (the strange lamp) and the abrupt ending in mid-action, show that there was more to be told, even if it never reached print there. There are also many elements continued from his first novel, specifically the use of a supernatural figure (Hiram in the *Mysteries*, The Devil Himself in this

novel), the often dissolute people of New Orleans, and the ambiance of the city itself. The theme of the devil lifting the tops off of houses and peering in at the secrets within was borrowed from the French satirist Alain-René Lesage (1668-1747), *Le diable boîteux* (1707; translated into English as *Le Diable Boiteux, or The Devil on Two Sticks*, second version in 1726) touched on in the first lines of Book III, Chapter VIII of the *Mysteries*. Lesage, a major interpreter of Spanish fiction and drama to the rest of Europe, had based his tales largely on *El Diablo cojuelo* by Luis Velez de Guevara (1641).¹¹ The genre introduced a series of moral exposés with a story of a protagonist who stumbles by chance on a demon who had been imprisoned. In gratitude the demon, specifically the demon of sexual passion, showed his savior what really was going on behind the blank walls of Madrid. Such an approach had particular appeal in a city where broad interiors of houses opened on interior courtyards, so that major figures in the town's society could be virtually hidden even from their neighbors.

The other major source for the novel are the works of the Swabian writer Wilhelm Hauff (1802-27), whose *Mitteilungen aus den Memoiren des Satans* and *Der Mann im Monde*, von H. Clauren (a pseudonym for Hauff) are specifically mentioned in "Satan's letter" published on 20 October 1861.¹²

The Devil in New Orleans is significant for us precisely for the way it communicates the atmosphere of the early Civil War in the Confederacy's largest city. The concerns of the Germans in the city are best expressed by an editorial appearing in the *Deutsche Zeitung* on 8 February 1862, "Do the Germans in the

South have a future?"¹³ This contrasts with most of the earlier editorials, which were preoccupied with the possibilities of English intervention to preserve the emerging division of the United States. Although the tone of the editorial reassured readers by arguing that the Confederacy would always protect civil society and allow Germans to persevere as an artisan class, the tone is still a bit forced and fearful. The strong pro-Union efforts of Germans in the Border South helped to make Germans all over the Confederacy suspect, and even strident Southern patriotism on their part could not help.

Recent and emerging scholarship, particularly in Andrea Mehrländer's forthcoming book on Germans in major Southern cities in the Civil War, has underlined the scale and enthusiasm of German participation in the Southern cause, particularly in the Carolinas, in Louisiana and in coastal Texas. Even Wilhelm Kaufmann, whose book, *Die Deutschen im amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg*, largely followed the Forty-Eighter tradition, conceded that several thousand Germans served in Southern armies, compared with as many as 750,000 in Union forces.¹⁴ The Forty-Eighters themselves, with their boistrous anti-clericalism and programmatic self-righteousness, often offended the older immigrants and those with strong religious affiliations, whether Catholic or Protestant.

Despite his abolitionist novel of 1854-55, Reizenstein himself felt that Germans had to participate in the defense of the South so that Germans would continue to have a place in it. He would serve in the medical corps of the Louisiana Militia in 1861-62, but after the conquest he made his peace with the

Union and remained in the city. He presented a series of lectures on the insects of Louisiana, using his vast collection of specimens as a door prize to encourage attendance. He would endure until his death in 1885 as “the Baron,” an increasingly eccentric New Orleans character.

Before the end of February, Admiral Farragut had landed on Louisiana soil, and by May Day New Orleans would be a reluctant federal city again under the command of General Ben Butler. Although the Southern identity of New Orleans will always be secure, its time as the greatest city of the Confederacy proved to be only a brief interlude.¹⁵

How the Devil is in New Orleans and how He Lifts the Roofs from Houses

a novel by

Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein

1861

I

Motto: In colorful images a little clarity

Much error and a spark of truth,

That's how the best drink is brewed

That intoxicates and instructs all the world.

(Goethe's *Faust*)

The very last ray of the setting sun was glinting off the steep roofs of New Orleans when a tall, haggard figure in the uniform of a zouave approached one of the shop windows along Canal Street, where a great crowd had gathered. They were there to marvel by the magic glimmer of the newly-lit gas-lamps at the trophies, once federal property, taken by Southern soldiers in the eternally memorable battle at Manassas. There could be seen the cap of a New York Fire Zouave, a fez with a long blue tassel on which the light traces of dried blood were still to be detected. Next to it was a scarlet-red wool blanket with black stripes on the end, which, according to the attached label, had also been conquered from one of Ellsworth's "pets." Next to be seen was the minié-ball gun of a Massachusetts soldier and a revolver with a brass bayonet. Next to that stood a mahogany chest for keeping medicine and surgical instruments. On its lid inlaid in brass could be read the fatal initials of Uncle Sam. Next to this chest was a bit of wood from the carriage of a cannon of Sherman's Battery.

But most attention was directed at a cloak of such dark cloth and of such a peculiar shine that one could not determine whether it was cloth, satin or silk. Small, shell-like buttons and many tangled silver braids gave it a remarkable appearance.

I as well happened to come to that shop window that evening, but I was not nearly as interested in the trophies as in that haggard figure in the zouave uniform, whose aquiline nose and thin, speculating lips with their cold expression made a deep impression on me. Since I had never seen this tall person, who bore the insignia of a colonel, I was rather struck by his appearance. The same astonishment gripped those around me, most of them old citizens of New Orleans, and I could learn from their gesticulations and their occasionally-expressed words what the core of their concern was. It seemed amazing to me that despite the fact that officers and soldiers of various branches ran by, and occasionally one would stop, none of them gave him a sign of greeting or recognition. Tiring of speculation, I had decided at last to start a conversation with him, when two old acquaintances saw me from across the street and crossed over to join me among the gawkers. One was an off-duty major of Germanic blood and a resolute, military appearance; he was in civilian clothes, of course, and wore a modest kepi covered by a towel. Across his face passed the reflection of his inner distress and his lips continually twitched as if to say, "O Varus, Varus — give me back my legions!" Alongside him, with the busy legs of a shopkeeper, ran a little man with a naturally ironic manner, a high forehead marked with a corporal's insignia. Behind his left ear was stuck a battalion-staff pen that poked and squirted on the solid cheek of the little man in impatience for a new order.

I approached the first one, hoping they at least could tell me who the unknown zouave might be, and I said to him, "Major, I have been standing here for fifteen minutes hoping to run into an acquaintance (since I know almost no one in New Orleans) who could tell me who the tall man is who looks with such scorn on the trophies?"

The major looked at the person in question and replied in a subdued voice, "That zouave over there? Looks like a man of distinction, and he wears, if I'm not mistaken, the uniform of a colonel — — I don't recall ever seeing him before; it is impossible that he is from here — — still, wait a minute, there is a zouave officer standing on the corner, perhaps he can inform us — — have a minute's patience."

With these words he left me, and I soon saw him in conversation with the officer. I saw from the latter's shrugging of his shoulders and expressions of denial that the major did not get a satisfactory answer. And it was so. The zouave officer expressed the opinion that it was some sort of renegade who had put on a zouave uniform for fun.

I was not at all satisfied with these words, and when the major had left I stepped up to the mysterious man and asked him for the time. In complete contrast to his hard, grim exterior, he answered with a benevolent, soft voice, "precisely the fourth hour before midnight."

After I thanked him for his strange circumlocution, I noted that it made him peculiar pleasure to describe the trophies with a precise analysis.

The mysterious man smiled and said, "Do you know, my friend, who owns this lovely cloak?"

"Used to own," I corrected him.

"No," he responded solidly and surely, "owns."

"How am I to understand that?" I asked him, "I do not expect that the owner of this curio will come here to reclaim it. Can't you read here on this strip of paper that it comes from the scene of battle and was sent here to acquaintances as booty?"

"The owner of this cloak stands before you," the mysterious man responded to me, laying his right hand on my shoulder. — I must honestly confess that a strange feeling overcame me with these words, something like goose bumps. "Yes, yes," he continued, "this is my cloak, which I lost in the rout as I stood on a height with Mr. Russell, the well-known correspondent for the *London Times* to follow the movements of the two armies and await the decision of that murderous fight. "I bet a hundred to one that the Southerners will prevail," I said to the good Russell. He did not want to believe me until the federals stormed past us in the wildest flight and I lost my lovely cloak in the press. Six weeks passed before I learned that it was in New Orleans. During this time I have seen and experienced much, and I have just dined with the old man in Washington, in the presence of Prince Napoléon, General Scott and Seward..."

"For heaven's sake," I interrupted him, "speak more softly, one could think you were ..."

“No one will understand us — that has been taken care of,” he interrupted me while lifting his left trouser leg.

“*Ah, ben venuto, Signor diavolo!*” I cried when I saw with whom I was dealing. It was the infamous horse’s hoof that he showed me, and there was not the least doubt that this apparent colonel was the Right Honorable Satanas in person. If I had earlier had an uncanny feeling when he presented himself as the owner of the captured cloak, it was just because I held him for a Northern spy. Now, however, when he showed his *carte blanche*, or rather *noire*, I was completely at peace; besides, I have often wished to meet His Majesty in person...”

“...Since we are old acquaintances ...” Signor Diavolo whispered.

“Certainly not!” I interrupted him, “but I am utterly charmed by this unexpected meeting, since it is one of my greatest interests to learn Your Majesty’s views of current events whose conclusions lie in the bosom of the future ...”

“How the man does speculate over my talkativeness in advance!” he responded. “But I know you are a man of literature from conviction, and such men are always my favorites. So I will speak with you in retrospect and will not be disturbed if you put it all down in black on white. You may accompany me on my nocturnal journeys when I lift the roofs of houses of the city to reveal the activities of their inhabitants. For this grace I ask nothing more from you than a hearty handshake at parting.

“But for this I must have back my cloak, which is still fixed in this shop window, for hidden in its folds we are withdrawn from the sight of mortals and can be entertained by people’s doings to our heart’s content.”

As Signor Diavolo said this, he went into the shop, where the proprietor met him with a friendly manner. “Your desire, colonel?”

“To buy this cloak!” he intoned, “I hope that its price will not exceed my means ...”

The proprietor first looked slyly at the cloak and then at the colonel and said, “In fact I am very reluctant to sell this trophy, since to a good patriot it would be worth more than all the treasures of the world ... but this time I will make an exception ... bad times ... and then one can set his conscience aside ... and since you are perhaps in the position to buy it with hard money ... you may have it for two hundred dollars!”

“I am most beholden to you,” Signor Diavolo replied and put down a roll of twenty-dollar gold pieces on the counter. Then he took the trophy out of the window with his own hands and hung it on his shoulders. On leaving the shop he said, “Did you see how pale this man became when he saw that solid gold?”

“He recognized you!” I remarked.

“Not at all, my friend! He almost fainted in his joy of seeing gold again!”

Night had already put on her starry crown and the silver sickle of the moon was sharpening itself on the lightning rods when Signor Diavolo took me into his cloak, lined with the satin paws of hundreds of cats, which seemed to promise a pleasant refuge. Thus were we two made invisible. We decided it was still too early to rise up into the air and lift the roofs from houses. His Majesty decided to fill the time until midnight with wandering the streets and making a few little visits on *terra firma*. Since I naturally also wanted to see which way our path would lead, I extended my head as far as possible from the folds of the cloak, I was astonished to find that this dominating part of my body seemed to throw an extensive shadow, despite the fact that I was totally invisible. The whole long figure of Signor Diavolo, however, along with the vast enveloping cloak, however, crept along without any shadow at all.

Since I expressed my astonishment about this, His Majesty said, "Don't you know, my friend, that the Devil only throws a shadow if one can see him? Your countryman Goethe, whom I deeply respect, did not know that, and that is certainly the only dud he shot in all of his "Faust." In your case, then I am not at all amazed that you cast a shadow despite being invisible. The time of fools has long since passed, and it has never truly prospered in this hemisphere. Further, the Devil will no longer be so silly as to make a contract over the ownership of a shadow if it is so easy for him to get the whole living being itself ..."

"That is an astonishingly good remark," I responded, "only I would not wish it turned against myself, in case Your Majesty ..."

“You have nothing whatsoever to fear if I hold you — and the fact that I have taken you into the folds of my cloak is only to prove to you that the Devil is the best fellow in the world, who only does his little masterpieces to kill time, to turn Polish beards into foxtails or alligators into gnomes.”

“Those are just figures of speech!” I thought to myself, “and if the Devil speaks the truth, then he lies routinely.” But I accepted the risk of a close acquaintance and had to accept any results.

We had barely passed a few squares when it began to become too hot for me. The cats’ paws lining the cloak caused such an intolerable warmth that I could hardly breathe.

“If you do not let me out of this cloak, I shall burn up!” I told Signor Diavolo, “and wouldn’t it be more comfortable for me and for you to roll up the cloak until the time when it takes us to the roofs, and we now become flesh and bone again? By then the atmosphere will be cooled down somewhat”

“I am in total agreement!” Signor Diavolo interrupted me, stripping the mantel from his shoulders, rolling it up and sticking it in the broad pocket of his red trousers. “Hang on to my arm, so we can wander and gossip together all the better.”

I felt reborn when I got my feet back on the ground, and I quietly felt reluctant about returning to the cloak when the hour of midnight approached.

Today the streets were becoming very lively, in fact in some places it crawled with people, since the evening dispatches had arrived from the theater

of war, causing something of an uproar. Then, when it became a little quieter, you could hear the loud tramp of rhythmic feet and the shrill commands of company commanders. "The fruit is ripening!" Signor Diavolo said ... but suddenly, as if seized by a tarantella, he made a sidestep that nearly bowled me over.

When I looked around for the cause of his strange maneuver, I saw a man with a large belled collection bag attached to an old crucifix. In a beseeching tone he proclaimed, "Give a little donation, sirs, for the poor souls from the North who have fled to the sunny South to free the Germans of the South from the shame of sin their Northern brothers have brought down on their heads! Please, please!"

"March! March!" Signor Diavolo shouted with such sparkling eyes and grim manner that for the first time I began to fear him. Then he made his signature whinny, stamping his horse's hoof so hard on the ground that you can see the impression on the granite even today, and advanced on the man with the collection bag. "Tell you poor souls from the North (who have already slipped through my legs) that I don't want them for a gift, let alone give them anything! That is in clear German, my dear former keeper of customs, and I tell you that they would do better to crawl into the belly of an iron turtle than to wander so shamelessly in the grove of the Eumenides. I tell you further, that the Germans of the South do not need a preacher in the wilderness. They know themselves what to do and to avoid! Also tell your poor souls that even the Devil had to

bend a knee in reverence when the blood of the most noble freedom-fighters of the German spurted heavenward on the Brigittenau ... of the greatest spirit of 1848!”

The man with the collection bag ran howling away, fell into the nearest coffee house and in his confusion ordered a *Lacrimae Christi* cocktail. I, however, thought to myself, “The Devil must have changed a lot recently, and despite the old horse’s hoof he is no longer the old Devil. Sated with the Judas-kisses of commonness and hypocrisy, he has become sick of those very people he used to try to buy. The modern Devil has become a fellow fighter for humanity and only takes those who stand stunned at the divide between good and evil. He lets the really bad go — into their own hell!”

I would have thought even more about the mission of the modern Devil had Signor Diavolo not suddenly stopped.

“Now we are here,” he said, “without intending to, at the famous southeast corner of Union and Carondelet streets. Poor Silenus! I would gladly have granted him longer to drink if Atropos, my sister in destiny, had not cut through the thread of his life so prematurely. I would give a dozen cat’s paws from my cloak if I could bring him up to the upper world again, even for one or two years.”

“How goes it with old Silenus?” I asked.

“It goes pretty well, on the whole — he was a little downcast and sad at the start, and we had to keep forcing him to play our shadow-games — until

recently, when I brought down some of his fellow tradesmen. He was particularly happy when I brought him old Fat Louis. Still not satisfied, he tormented me until I had to promise him to bring at least one of his old brothers of Bacchus every year ...”

“Oh, now I understand why they all seem to die so frequently, like him, and him, and him ... and who’s next?”

“That one is!” Signor Diavolo replied, taking a metal plate from his sleeve on which was painted the image of a vassal of Gambrinus in an uncanny speaking image.

“Impossible!” I said, “he radiates life and good health.”

“So sorry,” Signor Diavolo said, “it’s not my fault.”

We entered the saloon and, as we stepped to the bar, Signor Diavolo demanded three glasses of beer, of which he drank two at once. When we had clinked glasses and drunk, he took the third glass, emptied it to the last drop, and spoke in a solemn tone to the picture that hung behind the bar, “This for you, my Silenus, and this drink will descend to Hades and moisten your burning lips!”

Then it seemed as if the picture winked its eye in a friendly manner, opened its mouth and said, “Prosit, gentlemen — that did me a world of good!”

Utterly carried away by the magic of Cerevesia, (including the libation for Silenus) we emptied seven times seven and seventy glasses of beer in a half-hour, which is quite against my habit, and if I had not been there I would never have

believed it. Even Signor Diavolo grew warm and proved my previous opinion about the modern Devil. Finally he rose and said, "Let us not fall too early into German *Gemütlichkeit*, since we have other obligations to perform. If I am not wrong, we are only a cat's jump from another Valhalla, where premium lager is served in genuine German mugs. Let's go there, for we have only a short hour left, and then we'll go lifting roofs!"

III

It really was only a cat's jump to the Premium Lager Valhalla. Before we entered, Signor Diavolo said, "If they ask who I am, tell them 'Colonel Ellsworth of the New York Fire Zouaves.'"

"No one will believe that," I responded, "since every child in the street knows that this colonel was most unpleasantly put down by the patriotic innkeeper of Alexandria as Ellsworth was stealing a flag ..."

"They will believe you," Signor Diavolo said, "since I will put the gentlemen in there into a state that they will believe everything that's absurd and reject everything that's believable."

"Possibly," I responded, "but all the worse for that, then — since you will run the risk of being seized at once, and in the best case being tarred and feathered."

“Don’t worry! Even if there is a riot (which is pretty likely), then we will create sufficient diversion to give us time to become invisible — I just spread my cloak and ...”

“It will carry us through the air!” I added, making a pleasant recall of an old story.

“That is still not everything,” Signor Diavolo continued, “to fool them utterly I shall grow the reddish moustache and Henri IV beard — just as the late Ellsworth wore it.”

With these words Signor Diavolo took a small silver vessel in the form of a needle-box from one of the pockets of his jacket, opened it, and dipping in his index finger declared, “You will be amazed at the speed of this salve.” And in truth, no sooner did he touch parts of his face than a splendid beard sprouted in the required form and color, making the disguise complete.

“If one could conjure up this salve in any color you wanted, this would quickly lead to immeasurable riches in the hands of an enterprising man,” I remarked

“To be sure,” Signor Diavolo responded, “and if I did not have something else in mind for you, it would give me the greatest joy to give you the recipe for that salve as a little present. But I intend it for one of your countrymen, an exempt member of the honorable guild of pharmacists who hitherto has tried to make his fortune by making Hochstetter Bitters and phosphorus.”

“Oh, I know whom you mean,” I cried out, “the good man! He has long since deserved to be a Croesus — but if you think a moment, wouldn’t it be easier just to have him get a few hundred thousand dollars ...”

“No, no!” Signor Diavolo interrupted me, “you know that the energy of men is all too inclined to slumber when suddenly buried in gold without doing anything for it. Col. Ellsworth’s Beard-Salve (once the troubles are over) will take off and make the owner of the recipe the richest man not only in New Orleans but across the entire continent — still, here, let’s go in.”

The guests had already passed through all the stages of German *Gemütlichkeit*. This was determined from their reddened faces and the all-too-great nonchalance of their behavior. Only here and there was there some liveliness that was in the process of vanishing without a trace, like a spark among the ashes.

“Not even the slightest trace of Auerbach’s Cellar!” Signor Diavolo whispered to me, “only Brother Straubinger greets us over there, and an irregular fourth junior lieutenant snores away over in the corner, full of pride in his dreams — further back there is Uncle Midas, filled with astonishment over the increasing growth of his ears — the noblest of all philanthropists blusters thoughtfully under the table, and see with half his body over the rim leaning out of the open window, it’s the “Ecce homo” of Exchange Alley!”

“How well Your Majesty knows all the people! One could believe you had been in New Orleans for twenty years!” I remarked, in full marvel at Signor

Diavolo's knowledge of persons. He just nodded cheerfully to me and stroked his Ellsworth-beard.

"But where shall we sit? There, here — no, look at the floor! whole streams of barley-juice, in which endless rows of salmon, shrimps. mutton-roulades and shriveled goose-breasts swim — and just look at the pigs' feet! and there! A lovely waterfall descends from the bar, a little Niagara!"

With such remarks we made our way without injury to the back room, where we took our place at a small table. "Bring me a Throatcleaner!" Signor Diavolo commanded with a loud voice, with the result that many of the guests awoke from their dim state and also called for Throatcleaners. Throatcleaner! Throatcleaner! sounded from all the tables, and the two functional servants of the bar-owner had so much trouble handling the rush that there was momentary threat of their being crushed. A real "Throatcleaner" is a drink consisting of the following ingredients: whipped cream with maraschino, sherry and sulfuric acid, with the addition of refined sugar and some vanilla — to give it all a pleasant aroma. Such a Throatcleaner has the peculiarity during its consumption of producing insurmountable revulsion against smoking tobacco. Whoever can smoke a cigar or a pipe after a Throatcleaner can be certain that it is faked or has been incorrectly prepared. This demonic drink had already caused a dangerous elasticity in these spirits, already beaten by Gambrinus, and it was not long before there was whispering back and forth about who this handsome colonel was who threw down his Throatcleaner with such grandeur. Signor Diavolo

kicked me with his horse-foot and whispered, "See that moustachio'd fellow in a sapper's uniform? He will approach you and ask you something."

And it was so. The man with the moustache came to me and held his face very close to my ear, whispering, "Listen, dear friend, who is this colonel?"

"Col. Ellsworth of the New York Fire Zouaves," I answered in a voice just as soft. The moustached man reacted in shock, and without saying a word he returned to his place. It didn't take three minutes for a great storm to rise, and "The enemy! The enemy!" sounded from all sides.

"Tear down the bridges!" commanded a thin young man who took the pouring beer for a river, "so that the enemy cannot cross! Left and right wing! Have you no ears? Center, forward! Don't you see the peril? There, there! — — whole battalion, left turn! right turn! Advance in columns! — —

And now arose a dreadful uproar. Tables, chairs, everything movable was used to create a barrier, and a large empty beer-barrel was brought in like a 32-pounder, the floor broken in and the mouth aimed at Signor Diavolo. When they advanced with drawn swords, His Majesty said, "Enough fun, let's hurry to get out of shooting and sticking range!" And he unrolled his splendid cloak, and in its folds we fled swiftly as lightning through an open window and only rested when we reached the roof of a dwelling in Rampart Street near Canal Street.

"This is to be the first roof we will raise," said Signor Diavolo, "and how did you like the scene in the Premium Lager Valhalla?"

“Quite well!” I responded, “I understand what you intended. With this drama you showed how unfounded the fears are that we are not adequately protected if the enemy should attack our city, and that even the most stiff-necked sleeper will cheerfully reach for his weapons and rescue the state’s honor when the cry, “The enemy! The enemy!” sounds. *In vino veritas!* In German that is “the truth is to be found in Throatcleaners!”

IV

To the author or authors of “The Art of Lifting Roofs” — The Man in the Moon, the Clauren of New Orleans, and his Fellow-Travelers.

Most Esteemed Mystery of the Crescent City!

Your charming compilations recently appearing in the *Deutsche Zeitung* have drawn my attention because they awaken in me many pleasant memories that have not been quieted in me despite the fact that the confusions of the present day take up all my attention.

It is not an accident, for with me there is no talk of accident, but rather it is the fate of the New World that a masterwork of a republic founded by me has been outlived by time and rushes to its demise before the game was finished, by my own reckoning. I won, as usual, but I won in a shorter time than the most sanguine estimate would have granted me.

Since New Orleans and events there play such a major role in the game whose preparation attracted so much attention in my dear Germany in 1848, it is understandable that this fine city often enjoys my presence — particularly since the famous cohort of '48 has won me so many adherents. As a result I made many a promenade along Canal Street and environs, here and there losing myself on purpose in a corner of the most distant neighborhoods, out in the suburbs.

Out to dear Quarreltown and its jovial residents, where buttermilk, hand-cheese, cottage cheese, sour milk, sour — — vinegar and, God knows, whatever else is sold as sour, except sour faces, since in dear Quarreltown everything is friendly and agreeable; even the coffee has its own flavor, a mocca or mocker-taste, as they call it, mixed with a little stearin. Theodore could tell you about it. He has long lived in the neighborhood, where people import coffee and provide vessels passing north on the river, bayou or canal with teams to pull them. I certainly know the function of towing on the Weser, the Alter and the Lahn, and I know what outstanding characters are developed there. Towing up a river with a mule or a draft-horse is splendid schooling. It gives a man practical basic training. On the River Lahn, everyone doing towing is they are all named Fritz or Heinrich, but Fritzes always have the advantage, since Englishmen are always in love with these poetic names because of their Anglo-Saxon sound. The English consulate in Frankfurt has the same preference, and for that reason cottage-cheese Fritzes have flourished.

I also often visit the old Third District, spoken Gombo and eaten garlic even with Spaniards, Portuguese and Gascons. And Turkey — out back, where the world is free of — —, since the streets come to an end, — far behind Claiborne at the corner of Ursuline and — — — visit lonely garrets and contemplate the person who declines along with his career and the world. Those are precisely the people I can often use. They have arrived at a state of apathy that makes them eminently suitable to be my instruments. They take positions as stokers bringing wood to heat ovens, and for this they get some liquor from time to time. They are entirely suitable instruments of destruction. Unfortunately the fellows are usually bespectacled, since that is almost the only thing that sets them apart. Since their significance was identified when they put on glasses when they were fourteen, to give them a learned air, nothing can be said against it, since they would be much blinder without the glasses than with them, and one must concede them the light.

My travels extend from time to time to all parts of the city. It is no wonder that one day I heard to my amazement that the Devil was in New Orleans and that “the Man in the Moon” had seen him, spoken with him, hid under his cloak, and lifted the roofs of New Orleans, that is to reveal the “Mysteries of New Orleans.”

“The Devil,” I said to myself, “here you are and you don’t know a mortal word about it. That is certainly strange. Perhaps there was a little adventure along the way. But the “Man in the Moon?” Who, for all the world, has the

right to speak of the Man in the Moon? It is an original thought of my old friend Natas that no one will take from him so long as I reside in the surface world.

I wandered down the street and asked various persons whose exterior indicated they were gentlemen acquainted with the affairs of the day, "Could you tell me where the Man in the Moon lives?" Some looked at me with astonishment, others shook their heads thoughtfully and said, "No," and others asked me, "Do you mean the man in the full-, half- or quarter-moon?" Suddenly I recalled that we all lived in the Crescent City and that the Man in the Moon is impossible in New Orleans.

Uncertain what to do, I entered a bar and — look there! — I was drawn to a lonely man with glasses, with a worn black coat, dirty cravat and unwashed shirt. Involuntarily I thought of my friend Hauff's master in his quiet bar where Palvi was wont to meet him — and at once it was certain that the man had to give me information. I approached the bar with slow, measured steps and demanded a glass of barley-juice, invited the barkeeper to have a drink with me, and at once asked him, "Would you be so good as to give me the name of the bespectacled gentleman who nips his drink so shamefully there in the corner?"

"Oh, the man is not ashamed," the barkeeper responded. "You are most mistaken, sir. He was to the Latin school and has just told me that Horace was not a Roman. He has quite a lip and can curse people like a Paris fishwife."

"So, so," I said, "can he also do good?"

“Do good!” was the answer. “I have no idea. I doubt it. No proof available. But he could make good into bad at a time when people did not yet know him and decent people were not yet compelled to let him fall. Now he is morally dead.”

“May I ask what his name is?”

“His name is — is — is — doesn’t come to me right away, but it is some sort of bird.”

“*Vogel* [= “bird”] — good enough, that gives me some information. So I advance on his table and take a seat, saying, “Good evening Mr. Vogel. Am I disturbing you?”

“Please sit down. Quite pleased. But my name is not Vogel. My name is *Geier* [= “vulture”].”

Geier, so charming! Mr. Geier. Still a bird, really, I thought to myself. Even if it does belong to the family of carrion birds, all the better. The glasses are not without function, since by the rule of nature the vision of the vulture is poor. They *smell* carrion. They lack the sharp eyes of the eagle.

As the barkeeper had said, Vogel or Geiervogel or Vogelgeier was a talkative little fellow. As Vogel he was a feather in the quiver of the *Pionier*, and he was among the most radical abolitionists and Black Republicans, and I recalled that I had already seen his name somewhere with a black mark against it. He had also once published a harmless, folksy narrative in the *Pionier* whose birth needed more than a midwife. Still, the greater the pains the fatter the child!

And the result was splendid, with the small exception that the new birth came to the world with a hydrocephalic head that almost overcame the skill of the midwife and critics. From sheer terror one lens fell out of his glasses and broke, and in commemoration of this somehow fortunate event, he decided with a sigh, a resigned glance and an automatic grab at his well-holed pockets, to make half of his doctoral dignity a monument to a remarkable event of the past and not to commit himself again.

The evening was cool and the gas lamps flickered due to their rationing on account of the bad times. Several glasses of barley-juice, the barkeeper assured us it was brewed of hops and malt — but the poor sucker should instead have said, “anything but hops and malt” — excited the speech of my companion, and his enthusiasm rose with every toast.

“This is good beer,” he said, “a new invention since the malt disappeared.”

It is no wonder that it tastes good to him since the malt disappeared. He had long since lost the taste for hops and malt.

“You perhaps wish to know who I really am?” he continued. It had not even occurred to me to ask about it. “I am a scholar, I have actually studied *iuris prudentia*, but I lacked strength in my speaking organs, and a native shyness did not permit me to assert myself. As a result, I have been compelled to hide my knowledge in the depths of my innermost soul, and I sit there with my *Weltschmerz* like a brooding hen on a rotten egg, and if a kindred hen did not

occasionally drop a fresh egg into the nest ... I hate the world. The prosaic triviality of daily life disgusts me. And now these politics! This South with its hated institutions! I will satisfy myself by making a fist in my pocket and only expressing my thoughts among those who agree with me. Until then, the rod of my colossal satire will punish this puffed-up people. Just listen how I described one of your festivals a few years ago."

And now he began to declaim a long, broad portrayal of persons appearing in a festival parade, and when we reached the next lamp-post, I was astonished when he pulled out a filthy, torn copy of the *Pionier* and read aloud through good and bad until what was for me an extremely boring story was at an end.

He said, "Oh, I read it out to everyone so that they can see that it was once printed."

"Tell me please, you certainly have read Hauff's works and know the *Memoirs of Satan*."

"How could I not," he responded. "Satan! Memoirs! And how! My countryman's pen currently resides in this Sodom of the Secession. He, Hauff, inspires his devotees and must correct the present as well."

I thought, "Ha! Birdy! You really know precisely how to fall into the house, door and all." I asked him how it was possible that such a gifted, deep-thinking pupil of *iusticia* who bore the doctoral dignity on his very nose could

carry his magisterial modesty so far, and in such worn — I did not add unwashed — clothing.

“Oh!” he said with a poorly-suppressed sigh, “you should also know — true art is always modest, since the artist himself will be overlooked, slandered and pushed aside. Often the necessary *pecunia* is missing. I have already tried many things. I was involved in the daily press here for a long time, — I have ...”

“So you were a journalist?” I interrupted.

“Not exactly, but I was almost indispensable. I was a distributor.”

“Distributor?”

“Yes indeed. When the paper was printed, I hauled it about the streets.”

“So that’s it! I know. I’ve heard the boys crying out through the whole day, here is this paper, here is that paper. Important news from the theater of war, great victory — and so on.”

“Only just as I was unable to follow my chosen craft of jurisprudence because of my weak voice, it was the same in this case. Those accursed boys could run and shout far better than me — and so...”

Let’s enter this saloon and drink a glass of beer, I said.

“This place?” he asked in shock. “For God’s sake no. The man, Theodore, is so coarse, particularly if you have spent a long time at his table...”

“And?” I asked curiously, “and you have eaten and drunk your fill?”

“Not for that reason. But I still owe the man the bill and I do not appreciate his reminding me about it. He would not be at the cash box right now.”

“Just come on in,” I called to him. “The man will say nothing if you come in with me.”

“There he is coming out the door!” he responded, turning instantly around and bolting around the corner like a greyhound.

“Where did that damned scoundrel standing next to you go?” a man asked as he emerged from the public room. “An accursed people, these semi-students. Big mouths. They continually gossip about the immaculate nature of humanity, but they will not pay even a man who has saved them from starvation.”

We entered and sat at the marble table. I ordered a round and Theodore served. I don’t need to say much about him, since all New Orleans knows him. He will not restrain himself in speech, so he has the same experience as Seume when he wrote

Hence out of the many fine fields

I have not a foot’s worth to cultivate my cabbage.

because, as [Johann Gottfried] Seume says of himself elsewhere, in *The Career of Jeremiah Bunkel*,

I spoke directly and boldly
With fools and scoundrels;
For that I earned mouse droppings
Instead of pepper in my cucumbers.
I always called a spade a spade
And that delivered a direct insult
To many a dumb jerk.

A group of men sitting at the next table were entertaining themselves mightily, and their conversation drew my serious attention because it mentioned the devil, the lifting of roofs and other significant terms. Now and then the name of Reizenstein was mentioned, so that I asked my host sitting next to me why these gentlemen had so much to say about the devil in connection with a certain Reizenstein.

“Didn’t you read the *Deutsche Zeitung* yesterday? Here it is with the devil in it.” With those words he passed it over from the other table.

I seized the paper with curiosity and read with much interest to see what they were saying about me in New Orleans, and I must take the pleasure of confessing that Reizenstein deals with me decently. I only think the cats’ claws in the cloak was excessive. Decent and well-raised people never go so far as to

conceive of the devil as a gentleman who wears kid gloves and walks about without a horse's foot or cats' claws.

The things are really very nicely written, and their style works well, but the devil himself assures you, my dear Herr Reizenstein, that he has other business in hand than playing the lifter of roofs, particularly since he is playing a major role in the world-historical events now shaking America's continent. Still, I am pleased that they have studied so carefully with my long-departed favorite and university colleague Hauff. I marvel at your memory. Your adoptions from the *Memoirs of Satan*, including the Devil in the Bath, Hasenpfeffer, Natas and so on, are not bad. All that I have to object to is that I do not love imitations that have little originality. If you wish to imitate Hauff, then you have to do it in such a way that you seem to be a second Wilhelm. For that reason I recommend that you read "The Man in the Moon" a second time, to profit from the reading.

Finally I must ask of you the courtesy of not using my name in the future without my permission. The honor of learning your own name comes only from today, and I assure you that since I have checked in my lists, you will not make my personal acquaintance for some time, since you have several years yet to live.

When the hour strikes, we will meet one another again.

For that reason, dear Reizenstein,

Don't worry yourself.

If I cannot do it, my friend Hain will come —

And he will be the one to talk about uncovering roofs!

Then you will be so bold as to believe that is the devil.

Satan in his true form.

There will not be the slightest doubt,

When he arrives — he will settle the matter.

In the expectation that you will no longer abuse my name and will leave me untouched in the future, I sign myself

With great respect

Satan

V

Was it the influence of all too many Throatcleaners, or do I find myself in the charmed circle of a magician who only presents himself as the devil and seems to like the clothing of a colonel of Zouaves? I had to ask myself this question as I sat atop a roof while Signor Diavolo ran scouting along the wires of the fire telegraph from Rampart Street to beyond Canal Street and back again.

I asked him, "Aren't you about to raise this roof? I am burning with curiosity to take a look into the house of the lovely Cornelia de ***y, who is probably dreaming of her husband returning in glory from the battlefields of

Virginia so he may shower thousands and thousands of kisses on her lovely lips."

"Let's be quiet about that for the moment," Signor Diavolo replied, and he laughed so loudly that a watchman pounding his beat on the opposite side of the street stopped and lifted his head to see whatever persons were up above producing unexpected laughter. But since we were invisible to everyone but ourselves, his curiosity could not be satisfied. This alteration of His Majesty's mood would be explained before a half-hour was up.

"That damn fire telegraph has to be fixed precisely to this roof!" Signor Diavolo continued. "A dumb business! I will be done in an instant with the lightning rod. One push and it will give way and no one will be the wiser. But to put this wire to one side I have to use certain tricks that operate in an electrical medium and would suddenly trip fire signals all over town and make all the sleepers rebel."

"That will be no trouble," I responded, "since people will see right away that it is just a false alarm and everything will calm down again ..."

"And the two men currently visiting Madame de ***y will stop speaking once the alarm sounds, and they might even leave the house out of curiosity, and ... that will deprive us of the finest fruits of this night!" Signor Diavolo was most concerned.

"Two men?" I asked, utterly astonished. "And what would men be doing at this late hour in the rooms of a lady whose unbending commitment and

almost idolatrous love of her absent husband has already earned her the title of a modern Penelope in this town?"

"Cornelia de ***y a Penelope?" Signor Diavolo responded with a nasty smile. "Still, does it always have to be *that* when a couple men are found after midnight with a woman whose husband is away? Well, you will discover soon enough what it is about — now let's try to lift this roof up!"

"But the fire telegraph!" I objected. "Will it sound? You just said ..."

"No," Signor Diavolo said, "I believe I just found how to do it. If we succeed in bending the wires of the lightning rod and the fire telegraph so they touch one another over my hoof, then the magnetic flux of the telegraph will be paralyzed and firemen will be spared the trouble of running their legs off chasing imaginary fires."

"A fortunate thought," I declared, although I had not the slightest idea of the physical laws to explain this brilliant combination. But I was filled with marvel when I saw how Signor Diavolo lifted the roof as easily as a parasol in barely five seconds, opening to my gaze an image that so completely surprised and dazzled me that for an instant I had to close my eyes and hide my face in the deep folds of His Majesty's cloak so as not to fall victim to my own imagination.

First Roof

The Two Oyster Fishermen

Signor Diavolo was not devil enough to remain totally indifferent to the sight of the perfected beauty of Madame Cornelia de ***y. "How lovely she is this evening," he sighed, "I will place myself close by her side, so close that the fresh breath from her lips redden my pale cheeks and the fire of her eyes sets my Ellsworth beard afire. And you, my friend, will be so good as to place yourself between those two men, so you hear the words they whisper one to another."

I did as Signor Diavolo ordered, and soon I was thoroughly acquainted with the content of their conversation and was at least partly informed of the reason for their being here.

"If you do not pay us at least five hundred dollars for the trip," said a raw man with of filthy, wild appearance, "you can take care of your letter yourself."

"You're quite right, Giuseppe," the other chimed in, "there are spies everywhere now, and if they catch us, they would not hesitate to string us up from the nearest tree."

"We could shut the mouth of the short dingy-man with fifty dollars, and we would rather not pay him out of our own pockets."

"That is obvious," the other interrupted, "Five hundred fifty dollars and not a cent less!"

"What did Captain S* pay?" the one earlier addressed as Giuseppe asked, after a brief pause.

“Nothing at all up to now,” was the answer, “but he asked me to see him at his bookstore under the St. Charles Hotel, and there he is to give me a message to take to the commander of the *Niagara*.

“By the Holy Virgin! You are an idiot!” Giuseppe the Italian said, “The commander of the *Niagara* will not pay you a cent, and he will give you back a message for Captain S* — do not let yourself in for such complications; if the Captain does not pay you in advance, then ...”

“I know what you are trying to say, Giuseppe, but that will be the last order from this side. As the crooked cop said yesterday, the captain along with his friend, Captain W*, are already on the black list, so it will be barely a week before both are arrested.”

“Dumb gossip!” Giuseppe responded, “then one of us must warn them so that we ourselves escape with a whole hide.”

“Something occurs to me,” the other replied, “since I don’t believe the crooked cop was entirely wrong, then it would be best to be paid in advance from both sides and just not carry the orders out. Then, if one of the captains is arrested and certain letters are found in their hands, we would be in danger of being held at a difficult time. — —”

I saw Madame de ***y suddenly rise from the soft cushions of her armchair, where she had sat in deep thought, only occasionally throwing a contemptuous glance at the chattering oyster fishermen, and she stepped to a credenza, on which a well-filled strongbox stood. I also saw how the two men

pursued the movements of the beautiful woman with their eyes, halting their mutual whispering.

With that imposing presence that a female parvenu can never learn, since when it appears it is always the fruit of a youth passed in splendid society, Madame de ***y approached the two fishermen, who had been seated this entire time in the far corner of the room on a sofa. She presented them with two letters of differing formats while saying, "This letter in the larger envelope is for the first officer of the *Niagara* — — and this one here — — pay strict attention and make no mistake — — is to be placed in an oyster with black cross-stripes. Take care that no other than the short dingy-man oversees the unloading of your boat."

So! I thought to myself, a love-story is being played with the little letter, and that on an enemy warship! And now I thought of the laughter sounded by Signor Diavolo when I prattled on the roof about the dreams of the faithful wife.

"And this is for the two of you, gentlemen," Madame de ***y continued, "and you will get double if you can prove to me that my letters have reached the right hands."

With these words she handed each of them a thousand-dollar note, and as soon as this was done, she turned her back on them in an unforgettable gesture.

This utterly unexpected generosity appears to have disarmed the two fellows, who had just been planning a double extortion. They declared their

thanks aloud and swore high, powerful oaths that they would go through the fire for their noble benefactress.

Madame de ***y had already left the room after having taken a hard pull on a bell-cord. — — I saw Signor Diavolo vanish along with the lady of the house, since he did not depart from his goddess's side. She could not sense that this invisible figure followed at her heels and clung with his moist cheek to her full shoulders.

Two minutes after the bell had rung there appeared at the door of the room that led to the corridor the figure of a white man in long, silver-gray servant's coat. On his appearance the two oyster fishermen rose and departed, so I had to accept that this was the usual sign of their departure. They were probably led into the courtyard to depart by the rear door.

VI

Now I was alone. As much as the conversation of the oyster fishermen had drawn my full attention, I was still glad finally to be freed of the torment of having to breathe the powerful perfume of catsup and bad liquor that streamed from their clothing. The oyster fishermen were truly two repellent creatures, with faces for which there is no phrase in the German language. I thus had the poetic right to bemoan the fact that an evil demon of her spirit had placed Madame de ***y in the position of receiving such revolting beings in her rooms and make them bearers of her secrets, despite the fact that she was guilty of perverse politics and wayward inclinations of the heart. I considered what resources of self-control and heroism was needed for this woman, the wife of a man who held such a high position in the community and had just been named to a high post in our young republic, to bring herself to prostitute her innermost secrets to two such degraded subjects. This says nothing of the treasonous mission, whose upshot would expose her husband to the revenge of his political enemies and destroy him.

I was torn from these thoughts by the arrival of the Negro of our Queen of Hearts, who now entered the door instead of the white servant and, after arranging a few insignificant items, turned out the gas lamp. It was one hour after midnight. There I stood waited impatiently for Signor Diavolo, who

appears to have forgotten entirely in his zeal for the lamentable Madame de ***y that I was waiting for him impatiently to get out from under this roof.

Second Roof

The Cadi's Hat

How love can elevate the visage even of a devil! After that night Signor Diavolo had become an entirely different devil. When I spoke of Cornelia de ***y, he warmly pressed my hands and assured me that he would soon move events in such a way that the oyster fishers and their cohorts would fall under the full weight of the law without the least damage to Madame's reputation. "In order to cut the threads of this perilous alliance in two," Signor Diavolo told me one evening, "I have instructed J*, the secret policeman, to arrest the two captains at the officers' supper taking place in the Saint Charles tomorrow evening, and to seize the two Italians on their oyster boat at one of the bridges of the Old Canal. An officer who was a friend of mine will use his overpowering voice in the War Council to disavow and suppress in advance all attempts by the captains or the oyster-fishermen to bring the name of Madame into consideration."

I shook my head thoughtfully.

Signor Diavolo, who saw this, continued, "Don't play the infidel, my friend, and do not doubt my fulfilling my promise to act on behalf of the wellbeing of the lovely Cornelia. At the very instant when the Negro of the

Queen of Hearts cut off the gas and you were given quite an upset, so that you tapped around in the dark until the start of dawn, I got a good look at my dear from the adjoining "blue closet." There I discovered that her political sin arises only from a matter of the heart, and if one simply took away her opportunity to correspond with her Yankee Adonis on the blockade-ship and compensated her with a *Southern Orangeman*, which is not out of the question in her broad heart, she would cease at once to speculate in Northern principles!"

"I understand," I responded dryly in my utter stupefaction. "But that depends on whether Madame de ***y is satisfied with this exchange." This was because it was obvious that the "Orangeman" was himself.

"That is rather coarse, my friend," Signor Diavolo said, who thought my remark rather premature. But he also smiled in his dominating manner.

I responded, "Your Majesty must excuse me if I was a little too strong there, but I cannot imagine how you could so rapidly win the lady's heart in your present invisible form."

Signor Diavolo did not say a word, and I saw at once that he was not willing to go further into the subject with me. Yet I know for sure that his entire rescue project was based on jealousy, and I quietly was ashamed of having condemned Madame de ***y so utterly without forgiving her for having too broad a heart. In this matter did not take into consideration the words of Signor Diavolo's predecessor,

I am a part of that power

That ever wills evil and only accomplishes good.

And I extended him no pardon.

.....

“Frightful weather this evening! If Your Majesty did not pull the cloak closer around me, the raindrops would so spray on my face that I could not see. I am concerned that we will not be able to get safely to Esplanade Street to raise the second roof. Heaven seems to storm whenever you dare time and again to seize the role of fate on this earth.”

“Have no concern, my friend. Heaven has plenty to do on its own, and the devil is more concerned with his fallen angels. The reason is because a rebellion broke out up there many, many years ago that has not yet been put down. The once-loyal citizens of heaven no longer wished to obey, but they now intend to found their own realm in which they recognize only the elements as their sovereign, not Providence. Yes, they have become so powerful that they can no longer be thrown into hell, as happened with me and with my lordly cousins when we rose against the scepter-bearer in heaven. But even in my own realm there is now and then a rebel raising his head, and I can only keep order down there by handling them as nicely as possible by giving them a throatcleaner instead of nettle soup, which is unpopular. For that reason, in order to strengthen my own party, I will henceforth no longer accept nasty

people into my kingdom of shadows, but rather those who can be satisfied with a good bitter, such as Silenus and his company. — — — — yes, I assure you, my friend — — I am horrified at this epoch-making new age where everything — earth, heaven and hell — is in wild ferment, whose end (who knows?) will perhaps have no result except that the material conquests made by you humanity over centuries will collapse with a dreadful bang. The result will be that it will need a Copernicus thousands of years from now to prove once more that you will not fall on your heads. And then?"

"The dance will probably start all over again," I answered quietly and marveled at Signor Diavolo, who despite his slender interest had managed to muster enough clarity to evaluate modern philosophy in its full range.

In this way we had covered the considerable distance from Jefferson Lake, where we had completed a splendid supper at five minutes before midnight, climbing into the air, reaching Esplanade in an amazingly brief time. Fortunately this roof had no wires that could endanger us with lightning striking in all directions.

So with little trouble we entered the house, a cute but roomy cottage surrounded by a thick forest of evergreens and decorative plants.

We passed first through a room in which a costly night-lamp shed only sparse light. We heard the light snoring of children, who seem to sleep away, dreaming of sunlight and blossoms when it is stormy outside, exactly when adults toss and turn and worry about the cause and effect of all that electricity.

“How quietly the little ones are resting,” Signor Diavolo remarked, “while their mother is still awake in the adjoining room, awaiting the end of the storm.”

I glanced through the half-opened door and saw a woman in deep negligée standing before the fireplace, taking one daguerreotype after another in hand and tenderly kissing them.

“That is the image of her husband,” Signor Diavolo whispered to me, since he saw me looking on with a questioning gaze. “A marvelous story!” he continued, “but come with me into this room on the left.” Here he softly closed the door as soon as I had entered, drew out his hand-lantern and placed it on the round table in the middle of the room.

I had to take hold of myself so as not to let out a cry of terror. The lantern consisted of a single diamond cut in the shape of an octagon, the size of a cassawary’s egg. It was attached on two sides to a silver ring that in turn rested on very thin stand of magnetic iron, five lines high. The lamp projected such a bright light that I had to close and open my eyes several times before I was able to endure its brightness and see the objects it illuminated. The remarkable thing was that this diamond did not project its light beyond a ring three times its size, where its power ceased, leaving the darkness sharply cut off from the light.

This diamond was certainly a great temptation, and I have no idea what I might have done if Signor Diavolo had drawn pen and paper from his pocket, nudged my arm and whispered to me, “Here, my friend, take it if you decide to join my company in the Realm of Shadows in so and so many years.”

There was in fact no such offer, and it would never have happened, since, as Signor Diavolo later told me, this diamond lantern was Lucifer's wedding gift when he married the daughter of Dr. Faust a few centuries ago, producing *Atoti*, the literature demon. Three other spirits also sprang from this marriage: Mochiel, as swift as the wind, Aniguel, as swift as a bird, and Aziel, as swift as men's thoughts. A dozen little devils that never found fame also came from this union, besides the two great devils Mogol, the gold-devil, and Cacal, the devil of lust. This dynasty lasts to the present day, with precedence at all the important councils of hell.

"It goes no further than this hat," I declared, but with a subdued voice so as not to be heard by the woman two rooms away. Signor Diavolo had pointed in a mysterious manner to an object that lay in the area illuminated by the lamp.

"A hat like many others I've seen, and yet quite old and worn — — I see nothing remarkable about it," I remarked.

"That is the Cadi's hat!" Signor Diavolo intoned.

"The Cadi's hat?" I asked, "I don't understand that. And even if it is the hat of some particular Cadi, I can still discover nothing remarkable from that."

"That is the Cadi's hat, the hat of the husband of the lady who stands in front of the fireplace, who is the wife of the man whose picture she kissed," Signor Diavolo declared.

“Your Majesty is bringing me to distraction with this Cadi’s hat,” I responded with irritation. “Whose house are we actually in? Perhaps I could then find some interpretation for the significance of this hat.”

Signor Diavolo drew very close to me and whispered a name in my ear. “Is that all?” I asked him. “So that is the hat found on the bank of the Mississippi near the ferry, and it was used as proof that the unfortunate man found his death in the Mississippi? Sad enough! But what why should Your Majesty place so much significance on observing this hat?”

VII

“A family reliquary is always interesting, and observing it is worthwhile, even if it is only an old hat,” Signor Diavolo responded.

“That is nice enough,” I remarked, “and I think it is entirely alright that the unfortunate wife so carefully preserves the hat of her husband, who found his death in the waves, as the sole witness to this tragic event. Perhaps this is even the room he most liked to spend time in — — but to make such a fuss out of it, and to include it in this grandiose spectacle of infernal diamonds, I find that extremely odd, and Your Majesty could just as well have told me about it over a glass of wine.”

Signor Diavolo responded, “You would be completely right and this would be no more interesting than that of other dead people, if it were the hat of

a *dead person*. But the owner of this hat travels a couple times every week from Havana to Matanzas, and he is only awaiting the lifting of the blockade to return to his family and to release his children from the illusion that their father is *really* dead."

"What?" I cried out in shock, "then Mr. *** wasn't drowned, and the entire tragedy was only a farce? And the reward that his family posted immediately after the announcement of his death for the discovery of his body was only a humbug?"

"So it was," Signor Diavolo responded, "and the lady already feels such pangs of conscience because of the fraud committed on her husband's life that she no longer has a peaceful night, and with weather such as tonight she rushes as if mad to the fireplace, where the portrait of her beloved, of her husband hangs, and she kisses it time and again until the storm passes and all is calm again. As you have already seen, she does this every time, and because she is very religious, she thinks she can calm the heavens through the tenderness she pours out on the image, and that she turns away trouble from her husband that her conviction, which borders on hallucination, sees as threatening him. She is normally a thoroughly good-hearted woman, but conditions compelled her to act with her husband to spin this plot to keep him out of the claws of his gruesome creditors, to avoid problems that a life of dubious legality brings with it. What frightens her the most is that the children might talk about their dead father, and although she does not expect to leave the city forever to rest in her spouse's

arms, her face reddens whenever she thinks, 'What will my good children say when they see the father they thought was dead, and how are they to believe he was only dead for a year?' She asks herself this a thousand times, and she has no idea what she would say if the moment ever came that the children should meet their father."

Signor Diavolo accompanied these words with such a cold smile of *Schadenfreude* that I shuddered as I never had in my entire life. "If this story really develops as you are telling me," I responded in shock, "then this can only be Your Majesty's work, and I have no doubt but that you have also enticed the unfortunate husband to his daring speculation that plunges him into the abyss of perdition."

"Sir, obedient servant," Signor Diavolo agreed, "an indictment in all proper legal form! I only marvel that you do not also accuse me of leading the beautiful Cornelia from the principles of morality. — — But that is just the way short-sighted mortals are wont to pursue. Whenever the circumstances under which a human heart goes astray cannot be immediately explained, it must always be His Majesty the Devil who has his hand in the game. — — I tell you, though, that you human beings sin a thousand times before the devil hears anything about it or gives a direct incentive to do so. Ever since the great battle when we were thrown down from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell because we were not satisfied to be ruled by despotism but preferred to follow our own heads, people have sinned even without our involvement, that is, you

will do evil, and if you do not have the understanding to see this in time to arm yourself against evil, then you go to your ruin due to your own devilry, and we are spared the trouble of seizing your soul and leading it into the eternal prison!"

"Splendid!" I cried out, "Your Majesty knows how to preach from an entirely different text. — — But for my part, right now, I only harbor the desire to leave this place and let 'the Cadi's hat' remain the Cadi's hat as long as it wishes."

"Thankless fellow," Signor Diavolo growled. But that was only a phrase, since even the devil is not always ready to give the right answer.

An intense bolt of lightning that even pierced the closed shutters and lit up the *entire* room for an instant almost froze the blood in my veins, for it revealed a third person in the room, sitting in a high armchair alongside the round table, a person whose presence I had not sensed up to now. "Your Majesty!" I said, hardly capable of forming the words, "have you seen it? There is someone else in the room with us — — and you have not said anything about it to me?"

"That is the Cadi himself," Signor Diavolo responded with an icy coldness that chilled me through and through.

"The Cadi himself?" I stuttered away, "What does that mean?"

"That means that the Cadi has really died in this instant in Havana or Matanzas, for what you saw sitting in the flash of lightning was his departing soul staring along with us at his hat, with which he had done such tricks in life."

At almost the same moment one also heard the smashing of a heavy object followed by the shattering of a pane of glass. Without waiting for a question, Signor Diavolo said in a phlegmatic tone, "That was the picture that hung on the wall — it was of the Cadi in his order's costume — — only a poor lithograph of the lovely original that sits there in the armchair — — not much lost with that picture! But let me hide my lantern so that the lady is not even more frightened when she comes in here from the hearth."

Signor Diavolo had no sooner put the diamond back in the pocket of his cloak than the same lady who had kissed her husband's picture moments before appeared at the threshold with a light in her right hand to see what the noise was all about. She had barely taken two steps into this room when she sank to the floor with a terrified cry.

"That was the Cadi's hat," Signor Diavolo said, once we were out from under the roof again. "Even in death the Cadi could not be apart from his hat."

VII

The Devil in the Concert Hall

This episode in the house on Esplanade Street had occupied my imagination to such a high degree that I passed the rest of the night without sleep. I was upset with Signor Diavolo for raising the veil from my own secrets that even the most

malicious gossip had as yet been unable to decipher. Since he parted from me most coldly that night, I believed I could hope that he would not pick me up again so soon to participate in one of his roof-raising. Yes, I even avoided sitting near the St. Charles Hotel, where he was living during his visit to this city. I left it to chance when and how we would meet again.

So several weeks passed without my seeing him. Then my curiosity drove me to learn whether he was still in New Orleans. For this purpose I only had to approach the *leparello* of the hotel. This countryman of Cincinnatus of Caprero, currently first lieutenant, junior grade, of the cooks' regiment, gave me the mysterious message that Colonel *** did indeed still live there, but that he was only at home for ladies of high rank. Since I did not pretend to wish to visit his colonel, the answer of this flour-covered lieutenant seemed a little pert. But I let it go and without dignifying him with my gaze any further, I turned my back on him.

I repeated as I walked away, "Only receives ladies of high rank?" And who might these female acquaintances be that find entrance to the chambers of this hotel under the aegis of this hotel *leparello*? This question pressed so much on my avid spirit that I steadily fell away from my determination to avoid Signor Diavolo, until I came to the resolution to approach Signor Diavolo again under some plausible pretext. An occasion soon presented itself. They were presenting the "Teufelsmühle," and because Signor Diavolo had shown himself an avid fan

of German theater while here, I could almost take it as a certainty that he would attend this magician's opera unless other pressing business kept him away.

I was not disappointed. Immediately on my entrance into the classic space of the concert hall I saw him on the left side of the proscenium, leaning against the wall under the image of the prince of German poets. Since he was only slightly bowed and wore a black top hat as a head covering, his figure reached all the way to Goethe's feet, so that it seemed that Goethe was standing on his hat.

One could think of no more suitable tableau than what these two gentlemen presented. For that reason I must voice the opinion that His Majesty chose this position on purpose to suitably occupy (until the curtain rose) the imagination of those onlookers whose nervous systems were already being wound up by the overture. For the devil does nothing without a plan, and whether the moves or stands still, the slightest things still add to symbolism. The proof of this is his horse's hoof, which he carries with him if only as an allegory.

His appearance this evening pleased me to an extraordinary degree, and I felt drawn to him even more than before. His civilian dress suited him significantly better than the uniform of a colonel of Fire Zouaves. A dark-blue, long coat of the finest woolen cloth, cream-colored spats of the same material, a sulfur-yellow vest of watered silk, white batiste cravat and silver-gray gloves formed an ensemble that would evoke involuntary tears of envy from every dandy.

As was the case with our first encounter at the shop window where the trophies were displayed, this time he was not wearing his Ellsworth beard. Instead there flowed a long mane of snow-white hair with the same glow as loose silk down to his shoulders, making his face appear even paler than it really was. His temples seemed to me dreadfully fallen this evening, pressing his high forehead, on which there were neither wrinkles nor faults, into an imposing arch. His aquiline nose was thin and finely modeled, the mark of his sharpness of understanding, his deep sensibility, but also his unlimited secretiveness, particularly when his ever-moving nostrils were taken into account. His lips were narrow, and when he spoke he revealed two rows of faultless teeth, as white as orange blossoms and as close together as pearls on a string. Not the slightest trace of a moustache could be seen on his upper lip, and his chin and cheeks were equally bald as an eggshell. His admittedly large eyes did not show the slightest fire this evening but stared out without glitter. They resembled those of a dead man, whose lids no loving hand had pressed closed.

I was almost reluctant to approach him, since I did not have a good conscience, at least to the devil. For when only a few steps away from him, I realized that I had had no real reason for avoiding him week after week. There was no doubt that he had long seen me coming, and it was my own problem how I was properly to introduce myself to him a second time in order to restore our acquaintance. After a rapid approach to the left side of the proscenium I stepped up to him, greeted him with a light movement of the hand and said,

"May Your Majesty not marvel that I dare to express my thanks for gracing our German temple of the muses with his high presence."

"I am glad to see you again," he responded in a courtly manner, as if we had never been at odds. Then he left the position he had been holding, which is to say he freed himself from Goethe's footsteps, put his right arm on my shoulder and continued, "They are playing the 'Teufelsmühle,' tonight, and I am convinced that it will be generally well done, but not far from us will be sitting (and here he looked at someone who sat sunk deeply in thought, studying the theater program) Dr. Sassafras, a penetrating critic who makes every imaginable effort to make the actors feel his mood. For that reason he is seated next to Atoti, the great literature-devil, who will convince him how little purpose it would serve for him to stymie the growth of your German stage by pouring out all the stock of established phrases from decades of reviews in order to embitter the morning coffee of the poor readers. Atoti will tell him that the larger public is confused about the true talents of the performers through his criticism, and that he is more or less compelled to take over the office of judging their efforts."

"There Your Majesty is entirely correct!" I responded, "and let all theater critics who write with goose-quills be condemned to drown in their own ink."

"Easy, easy my friend," Signor Diavolo responded, "let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater, for next to Dr. Sassafras there sits another who writes with a hawk's feather, and then ..."

Then the curtain rose. I followed the hand of Signor Diavolo, who moved to the center of the proscenium.

[End of the last episode – none further]

¹ A paper presented at the 26th Annual Symposium of the Society for German-American Studies, Amana, Iowa, 19 April 2002, "The Devil in Confederate New Orleans: Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein's Second Novel."

² See Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein, *The Mysteries of New Orleans*, Steven Rowan tr. and ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

³ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 29 September 1861, p. 1.

⁴ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 6 October 1861, p. 1.

⁵ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 13 October 1861, p. 1.

⁶ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 20 October 1861, p. 1.

⁷ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 10 November 1861, p. 1.

⁸ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 17 November 1861, p. 1.

⁹ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 24 November 1861, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 1 December 1861, p. 1.

¹¹ See in general Alain-René Lasage, *Le Diable boiteux. Texte de la deuxième édition avec les variantes de l'édition originale et du remaniement de 1726*, Roger Laufer, ed., École pratique des hautes études, VI^e section, Livre et sociétés, no. 4 (Paris: Mouton, 1970); also idem, *Le Diable Boiteux, or The Devil on Two Sticks* (London: Tonson, 1707; repr. ed. Josephine Grieder, New York: Garland, 1972).

¹² *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 11 (Leipzig, 1880), 48-49.

¹³ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 8 February 1862, p. 2.

¹⁴ Wilhelm Kaufmann, *The Germans in the American Civil War*, tr. Steven Rowan (Carlisle, PA: Kallmann, 1999).